

Chapter 2

Lily’s POV

"You've lost your mind! Ryan loves me, we are getting married today!" I yelled again, tears streaming down my face as I tried to break free from Rose’s grip.

"Huh? Bitch, you say his name one more time," Rose raised her hand and slapped me so hard my lip split open. But the taste of blood wasn’t worse than the taste of betrayal. I was in shock. My little sister struck me?

The one I had done so much for?

I wanted to be an actress, but my parents said that would get too much attention on me and cause me safety concerns. By the time I was fifteen, I was already working wonders in multiple areas.

But my sister was encouraged to pursue her acting career. So, when she landed a role in an adventure romance movie, she turned to me for help. Her character would wear a mask, have a sexy body, and wear tight latex pants and a top, fighting the bad people. Her love interest was played by a very well-known actor.

But she couldn’t keep her body to the standards they wanted. That’s when I stepped in. I would wear her clothes, come out of her RV, play the role perfectly, and even do the fight scenes well since I was being trained in the basement for that. Then she would do the rest of the scenes using her own face. It helped her career skyrocket, and I was truly happy for her.

But today, she wasn’t happy for me.

"You—you hit me?" I couldn't believe it. It has to be a nightmare or some big prank.

"Yeah, so what? That’s what you deserve. Have you not realized I’m the bride today? You are nothing, just a rat who lives in our basement," she spat in my face, causing my heart to miss a beat after another.

My legs felt weak as the truth hit me like a wave. My lips trembled, but no words came out.

Rose, growing impatient, snapped at the guards. “What are you waiting for? Drag her out of here!”

“Yes, Young Miss!” the guards replied in unison, tightening their grip on my arms.

“Let me go! Please, you’re making a mistake!” I cried, my voice breaking as I struggled against them. Pain shot through my body as they dragged me forcefully toward the door. I finally managed to escape from that cold, damp basement. I can't go back! There must be some mistake.

“Rose! Riley! Stop this! Please!” she screamed. “Mother! Father! Help me!”

My desperate cries echoed through the halls, but no one came to my aid. My strength was no match for the guards, and they dragged me through the grand corridors like a lifeless doll.

When we reached the large, opulent hall downstairs, my frantic sobbing slowed for a moment. My gaze landed on three familiar figures standing at the base of the staircase: my parents and Ryan. Relief surged through me like a beacon of hope in the darkness.

“Mother! Father! Ryan!” I called out, my voice filled with desperation.

But the moment their faces came into view, my hope shattered. They stood there, their expressions cold and indifferent. My mother looked away as if ashamed, my father’s jaw was set in grim silence, and Ryan’s face was a blank mask.

My knees buckled. My voice trembled as I sobbed, “Why? I’m your daughter... why are you doing this to me?”

“Don’t look at us like that. You can’t even do that much for your little sister? Let her be happy,” Dad said with a shrug, causing my jaw to drop.

“Your dad is right. We let you have the pleasure of learning all the skills and work. Just make a small sacrifice, consider it a way to repay us for raising you. Your sister deserves this gown and the wedding,” Mom sounded so oblivious in that moment that it hurt.

“I should be grateful that you caged me in the basement and made me work to build others' careers?” I asked her just to make sure I was hearing her right.

As a child, I had accepted their decisions without resentment, believing their reasons were valid. But now, the truth became painfully clear. My exclusion hadn’t been for my protection—it was to erase my existence.

Now, my dreams were shattered in the cruelest way. The very people I had trusted with my life—my family, my best friend, and the man I loved—were the ones who turned against me. They didn’t just betray me; they stripped me of everything I held dear.

My pleas were met with silence, their response cutting deeper than any words could. The people I had loved and trusted the most had abandoned me.

Rose cast a victorious glance and snapped her fingers, signaling the Ryan. Ryan rushed at me and slapped my cheek. Before I could even gather what he had just done, he was dragging me out of the room and towards the basement.

The basement!

No! This can’t happen. I cannot go back there.